

MONTANA SAGE GROUSE OVERSIGHT TEAM

PROCEDURE 01-2016

PROCEDURES FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE GRANT APPLICATIONS UNDER THE MONTANA GREATER SAGE-GROUSE STEWARDSHIP FUND GRANT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Montana Greater Sage Grouse Stewardship Act, codified at Sections 76-22-101, et seq., MCA, establishes a grant program (“Grant Program”) for maintaining, enhancing, restoring, expanding, and benefiting sage grouse habitat and populations;

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Grant Program is to provide competitive grant funding and establish ongoing free-market mechanisms for voluntary, incentive-based conservation measures benefiting sage grouse habitat and populations on private lands, and public lands as needed.

WHEREAS, Section 76-22-105, MCA directs the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team (“MSGOT”) to evaluate and take public comment on applications submitted to the Grant Program;

WHEREAS, MSGOT desires consistency in its process and procedures for the evaluation of applications to the Grant Program.

THEREFORE, THE MONTANA SAGE GROUSE OVERSIGHT TEAM DETERMINES THAT THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES WILL APPLY WHEN PROCESSING GRANT APPLICATIONS UNDER THE ACT:

1. From time to time, MSGOT will announce a deadline for filing Applications to the Grant Program. MSGOT may accept Applications at any time, but MSGOT need not take any action on Applications until after the next application deadline.
2. The Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program (“Program”) will review all Applications for completeness.
3. The Program may return any incomplete Application to the Applicant.
4. Completed grant applications will be made available for public review through publication on the Program website.



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5. The Program will prepare a report (“Grant Recommendation Report”). The Grant Recommendation Report, at a minimum, shall recommend:
 - (A) grant funding priorities;
 - (B) a ranking of all complete Applications in consideration of the evaluation criteria;
 - (C) the proposed grant amount, if any, for each complete Application;
 - (D) any proposed conditions which the Program believes are necessary on the use of any grant funds for each Application, whether recommended for funding or not; and
 - (E) any other information the Program believes is relevant to MSGOT’s evaluation of the Applications, including reports or input from independent reviewers knowledgeable in the subject matter.
6. MSGOT will evaluate all complete Applications at a public meeting (“Grant Evaluation Meeting”). MSGOT will solicit written public comments regarding each Application prior to the Grant Evaluation Meeting and accept verbal comments at the meeting. The Grant Evaluation Meeting may be one of MSGOT’s regularly scheduled meetings.
7. At the Grant Evaluation Meeting MSGOT, will consider any public comment, and consider the Grant Recommendation Report in its evaluation of all completed Applications pursuant to the evaluation criteria.
8. The Program will provide written notice to each Applicant concerning any action taken by MSGOT on the application.
9. The Program, by and through the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (“Department”) will prepare the agreement between the Department, MSGOT, and a successful Applicant pursuant to 14.6.102, ARM. MSGOT will review, and may approve, such agreement at its next scheduled meeting.

Dated this 19th day of February, 2016.

s/ Tim Baker
Tim Baker
Chair, Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team

